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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Radio Service

OFFICE OF
INFORMATION

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1940

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "GRAPEs." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Food habits have a way of changing with the seasons. And now that there's a feeling of fall in the air I'm sure you're thinking about some of the warm, spicy dishes that are favorites every fall. It's the season for nuts--wild duck--pumpkin pie--baked squash--apples--and grapes. Any one of these foods is worth talking about, but today I'd especially like to tell you about grapes--and give you some points that have just been sent me by the Bureau of Home Economics of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

This is a good year for grapes and most city markets are filled with baskets of the colorful fruit. California is having an especially good crop of table grapes --as well as grapes for wine and raisins.

As you know, the California grapes are the kind with tight skins, and they come in several different varieties. Right now there are the tiny, green Thompson Seedless--and the red Flame Tokay that is so abundant this year. Besides there is the large, meaty Malaga with its purple skin--and the red Emporer.

East of the Rocky Mountains, the grapes are entirely different. They are known as the slip-skin grapes, because you can push the pulp right out of the skin. These eastern slip-skin grapes grow wild in tree tops and along the roadsides. But they are also cultivated in vineyards.

And the slip-skins also come in several varieties. The bluish-purple Concord is the best known. But if you want an assortment of colors, you can get other

varieties that are green, white, red or black. And in the southern States there are also the muscadine grapes that grow almost like individual berries.

So when you go to buy grapes you can expect to find the two different kinds --the California grapes and the eastern slip-skins, with different varieties of each.

If you're picking grapes on the market, look for fruit that is firm and plump. And if you're going to use the grapes for eating fresh--better lift up a bunch and make sure that the grapes do not fall off the stems at the slightest touch. Don't buy grapes that are moldy and wet. Also be on the lookout for fruit that has been injured by frost. You can tell frozen berries by their soft and flabby appearance.

So much for the selection of grapes.....Now here are some ideas for using the fruit. Of course, your family will enjoy eating fresh grapes--and that's the perfect way to get the full, rich flavor. Use them as a breakfast fruit, and also in salads and desserts.

And don't forget that you can combine grapes with other fall fruits--yellow pears, late rosy-cheeked peaches, and shiny red apples. Pile the fruit into a bowl--a wooden mixing bowl will do--and use it as a centerpiece. Then let the members of your family help themselves.

And, of course, you can use grapes in cooking--that is, the slip-skin kind. While they are in season, you can make them into pies and puddings. And you can also preserve the fruit as grape juice--it's refreshing when served cold, and hot spiced grape juice makes a good beverage for chilly days.

Grape juice is easy to make, but you may have a little trouble with crystals forming. These crystals are only cream of tartar, so they're perfectly harmless. But they do mar the perfection of many a bottle of homemade grape juice.

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An easy way to avoid these crystals is to let the juice stand in a cool place overnight, after you've strained it. Then the next day, you can dip it out carefully and strain it a second time. When you make the juice into jelly, you can use the same method to get rid of the crystals. Or you can combine the grape juice with the juice of another fruit, such as apples.

And now let me tell you just a little bit about the history of grapes in this country. The California grapes, that I've been talking about, come from vines that were originally planted by the early missionaries from Europe. That's why they happen to be European type grapes.

But east of the Rockies, the grapes are native American. The wild grapes grow just as they did when the first colonists came to settle the New World. In fact, these wild grapes were so abundant that America was once called "Vineland." The growers have crossed these native American grapes with some of the best European stock to develop the cultivated slip-skin grapes that are now so widely used.

Well, that's a short story on grapes. And homemakers are fortunate to have the two different kinds--because that means there are more ways to use grapes in meal planning.



